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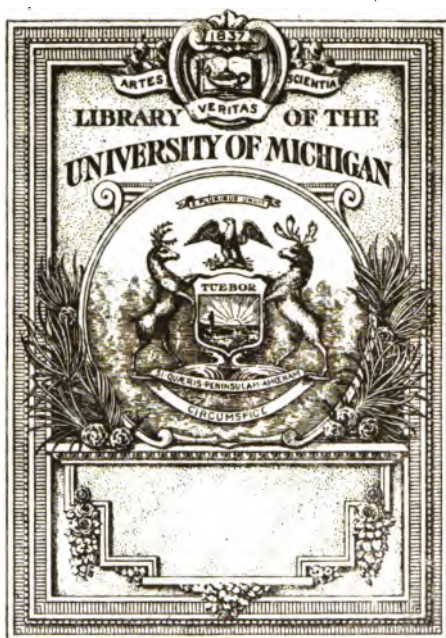
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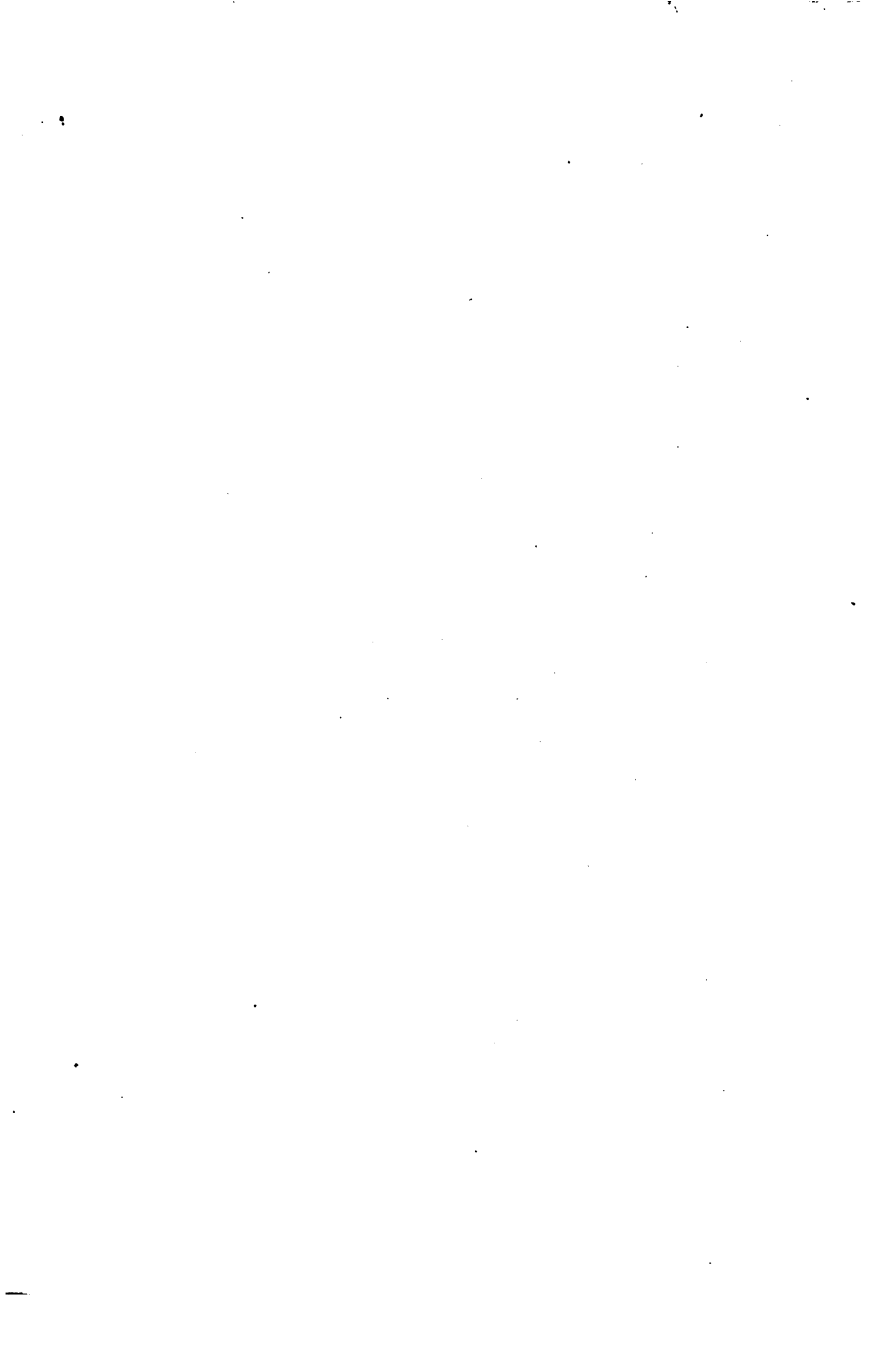
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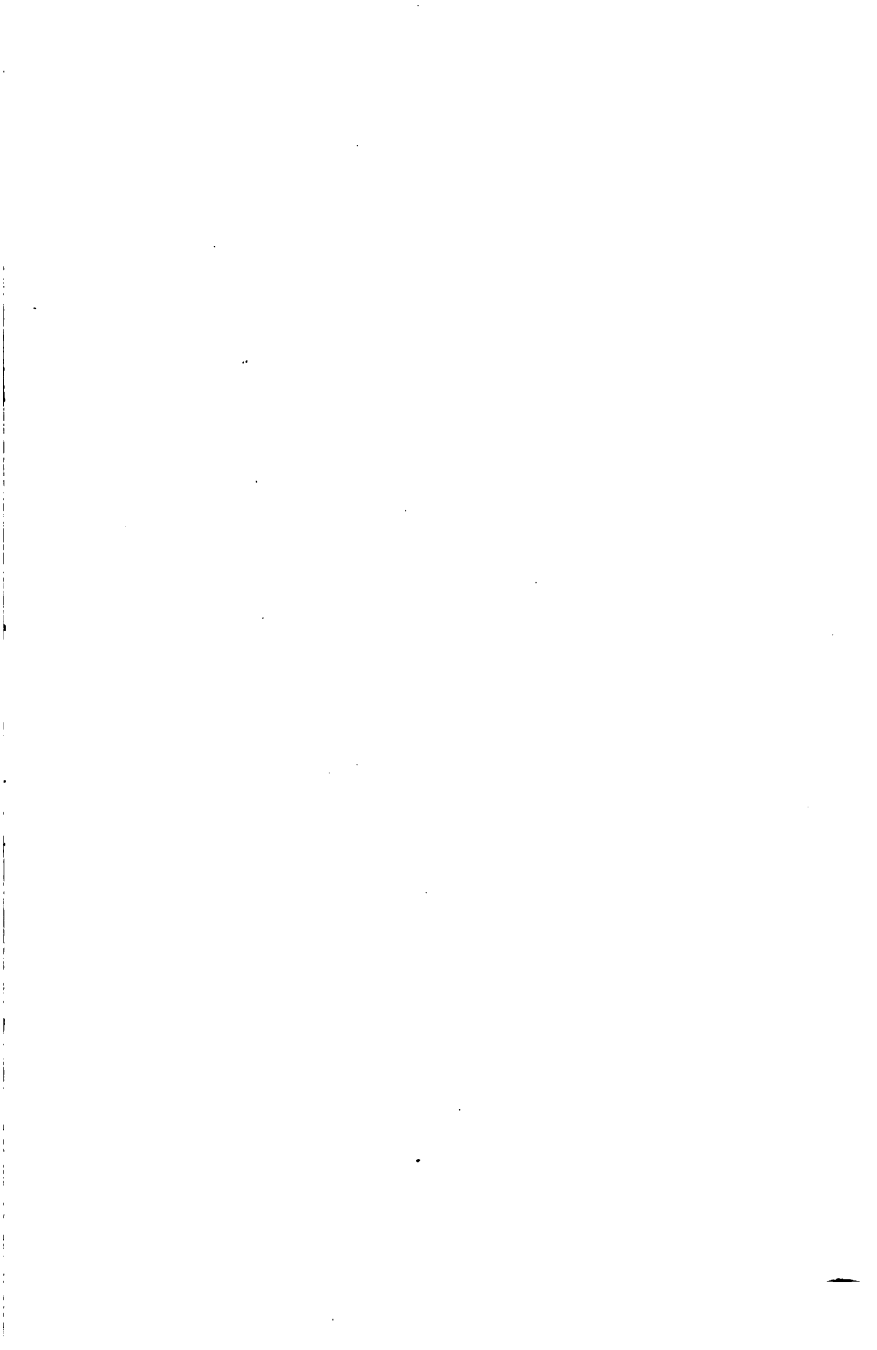
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"IT WAS DR. TODD ON HIS OLD BLACK HORSE." Page 28.







IN THE POVERTY YEAR

BY
MARIAN
DOUGLAS

New York.
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Publishers.

ND

IN THE POVERTY YEAR

*A STORY OF LIFE IN NEW
HAMPSHIRE IN 1816*

BY
MARIAN DOUGLAS

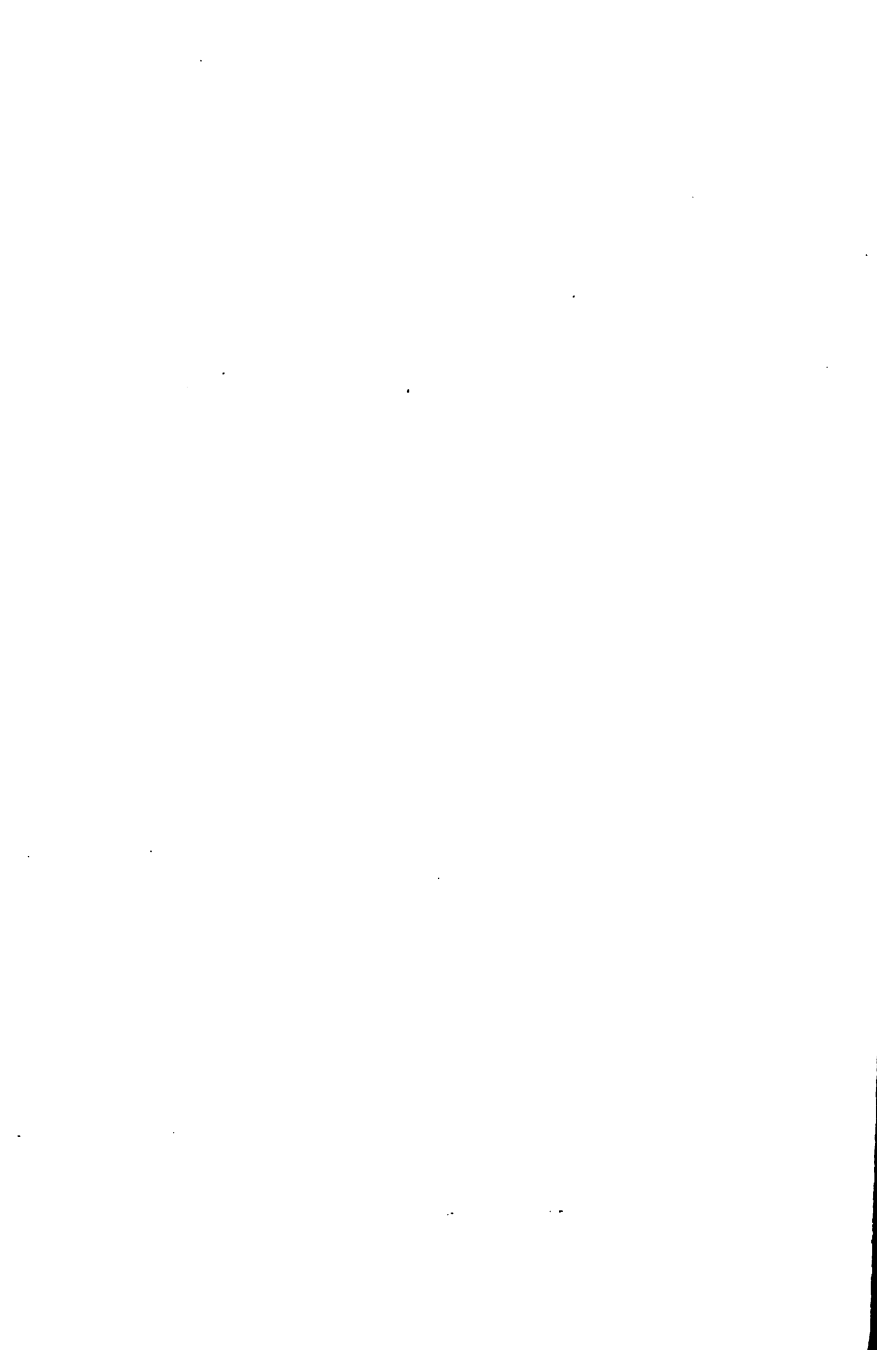


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BOSTON, U. S. A.

IF THERE IS A LESSON IN THIS
SIMPLE STORY,
IT IS SURELY THAT OF NEIGHBORLY KINDNESS ;
AND TO THE DEAR HOME-NEIGHBORS,
WHO SHOW SO MUCH OF IT IN THEIR LIVES,
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS
MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



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IN THE POVERTY YEAR.

I.

PHILOMELA.

“CAW! caw!” The first crow came flying back.

“Caw, caw!” echoed Philomela, trudging over the snow-crusts fields, with a big brown pitcher in her hands.

Philomela was glad to hear a sound of spring. The winter had been dreary in the rough house of two rooms and an attic, where she lived. It was her eleventh birthday, and no one had remembered it but herself. Her mother was dead; her father, a rheumatic shoemaker, had “twinges” in his knees that morning; Lafayette, her half-brother, was sullen, being condemned to whittle shoe-pegs, instead of having his freedom, out-of-doors; and Rosann, her baby sister, had the sleepy dullness of a cold.

But out in the sunshine, where the crows were calling, and the willow buds beginning to swell, Philomela’s heart grew light again. She

forgot that her gown was patched with another color and that her coarse shoes had gaping holes, and hastened on, singing to herself, when whom should she see but Mr. Wright, the new minister, coming toward her! He was a pale, handsome man of thirty, clad in a long, black cloak that gave grace and dignity to his slender, erect figure.

He was still called "the new minister," though it was his second year in the town; for in those days long pastorates were the rule and short ones were deemed discreditable alike to pastor and people.

He lifted his beaver hat with graceful courtesy. "I am happy to see you, Philomela," he said. "I am glad to have one nightingale in my parish."

The little girl looked up wonderingly.

"Your name," said the minister, "is a Latin one. It is what the people who lived in Italy, many years ago, used to call the nightingale, a bird that sings in the night-time."

"It can't be the night-hawk?" asked Philomela, perplexed; "they fly round after sunset, and make a noise, but it isn't what you call singing."

"Oh, no!" answered the minister; "the nightingale only lives across the sea, and makes sweeter music than any other bird. We all have our trials; and when they come we, too, must learn to sing in the darkness."

With a grave smile the minister passed

along; and the child, who counted speaking with him a great event, hurried on to the big house on the hill.

It was the "Squire Moony mansion;" the admiration and envy of the dwellers all around. It was a large square building, with many windows, and rooms for different uses — dairies and pantries, and rooms for washing, spinning, and weaving. It had a great kitchen, with the best of fireplaces, and a parlor where the inside shutters seemed always drawn, and where a flowered carpet, a hair-cloth sofa, a mahogany table, and a brass fender waited in utter darkness the rare coming of "quality company."

But to-day, when Philomela reached the place, the parlor shutters were drawn back, and she heard voices within. Very timidly, but wanting much the skimmed milk for which she had come, she sat down in the kitchen, and waited. To her childish mind Mrs. Moony was the embodiment of earthly greatness and wisdom. She was, in truth, a kind-hearted, capable woman, with the self-satisfaction that so frequently comes from living with those that know less than one's self.

Mrs. Moony had seen Philomela coming up the road, and soon she came out from the parlor to speak to her.

"You want skim-milk," she said, knowing the child's errand from her pitcher. "I've got company in the parlor, but pretty soon I'll get some for you."

In honor of her guest, though it was still morning, Mrs. Moony had donned her third-best gown, a brown homespun; and its very short waist and narrow skirt ill accorded with the ample girth and broad shoulders of its wearer. But Mrs. Moony was the "glass of fashion" of that little neighborhood, and Philomela looked on her with sincere admiration.

The little girl sat by the fire, and remembered how wrong it was to be a listener; but Mrs. Moony had left the door open and, conscious only of her visitor, talked on with no lowering of tone.

"And weren't you thankful last year," she said, "when you found he was caught and caged at last?"

"Well, no;" said another voice, low but clear. "My husband thinks he is the most wonderful man of this or any age, and that if he could have escaped and come to this country we should through him have become the greatest power ever known on earth."

"Well, *I* think," said Mrs. Moony, with an indignant quiver in her voice, "that he is the Beast of the Revelation. He's as cruel as a tiger. He wants to suck blood like a musketer, till he can't hold any more. And *think* how he treated his wife!"

"She was a very vain woman," said the other, "very extravagant, and exceedingly fond of clothes."

Then came a pause, of silence. Even little

Philomela, in the narrowness of her life, knew it was of Napoleon and Josephine they had spoken. In the humblest homes of New England the name of the imprisoned Emperor was on the lips of everyone.

"Do you enjoy your minister?"

The silence at last was broken by a skillful change of subject.

"Oh, Susan!" returned Mrs. Moony, "I wish you could hear him! He's solemn and flowery too. His name is Wright, and we all say he's the *right* man in the *right* place. It's raising his salary that troubles us. People like him, but it's hard times."

"*Very* hard, *everywhere*," said the soft voice. "Does he visit much?"

"Oh, he calls round among the sick; but he doesn't visit to eat unless he's specially invited; but, of course, all the well-to-do have him often to spend the day, and every meeting-going family that amounts to *anything*, invites him to supper at least once a year."

A sense of utter nothingness possessed little Philomela. At their house they had never even *spoken* of having "the minister to eat."

"Do you have many poor families?"

"Poor families!" repeated Mrs. Moony. "Enough and to spare! Folks that live in half-built houses, on mortgaged land, and try to farm without cattle or money! There's a real likely child sitting in the kitchen now, but I'm afraid she can't ever be much — she's so

hampered. Her step-father"—here Philomela only caught scattered words; "rheumatic"—"puts off work"—"shiftless"—"talks politics."

"Franklin says," said the soft voice, "God helps those that help themselves."

"And my husband says," returned the other, "a poor man who makes the most of just what he's got, however little, is more likely to succeed than the rich one who has more than he looks after, and lets little things slip."

Then, with a sudden start, Mrs. Moony came hastening out to the pantry, skimmed some pans of milk, filled Phily's pitcher, and hurried back to her guest, quite unobservant how the timid voice trembled that said, "Thank you, ma'am."

Once out of sight of the house the little girl sat down on a rock, amidst the melting snows, and wept aloud.

For the first time she realized that she was "down in the world;" that a hard, dreary life lay before her and, worse yet, for her one treasure, dear little Rosann.

She sobbed and sobbed; and then with sudden change bright thoughts began to come back.

Mrs. Moony had said that she was "a real likely child;" and Franklin had said—who was he?—that "God helped those who helped themselves;" and Mr. Moony had said that "there was hope for the poor man who made the most of what he had;" and the minister had told her "to be like the nightingale."

By the time little Philomela reached home,

she had planned her life anew. She would make the most of what she had. She would help herself, and then God would help her; and if all were gloomy she would sing in the dark.

And besides, this one thing she would do! The disgrace of her family should be wiped out! Sometime, someday, somehow, she would have the minister to supper.

II.

PHILOMELA'S FOLKS.

PHILOMELA could not remember her own father; but his silhouette hung on the wall of the spare-room, and his nose and chin were like her own.

Twelve years before, at the age of twenty-three, he had come with his girl-bride to this growing township on the Pemigewasset, anxious to share in its "promising future." But he had only made a small clearing in the woods, and spent most of his money in buying a pair of oxen and building a small house, when he was killed by a falling tree, and his wife and baby were left alone among strangers.

The young widow had no old home to which she could return; her mother was dead, and her father and brothers followed the sea. So she stayed on in her desolate house, not knowing whom to trust; since, though all her neighbors were kind to her, they had many "differences" among themselves.

But when a quiet respectful young shoemaker, whose work everyone was needing, came to the place, it was perhaps not strange that

timid in her loneliness and weary with her cares, she married him with brief delay.

"I know she might have done worse," Mrs. Moony had admitted; "he don't wrestle, and he don't drink—but, when all's said, he is one of the folks you praise for what they *aint*, and not for what they *are*. I fear she'll find out, sometime, that George Mills is a 'to-morrow man.'"

And he was. It was not alone the rheumatism to which he was subject that held him back. Gentle, but stubborn, he had formed the habit of delay. He would sit by the fire and read while his customers impatiently waited for their shoes, and talk politics while the crows were pulling up his corn. After eight years spent in nursing him when he was sick, and trying to hurry forward the work when he was well, his wife went into what was called a "swift decline," and one morning, conscious that her life was passing, she called Philomela.

"*You*," she said, "are like your own father. *You* must look after little Rosann;" and the nine-years-old child forced back her tears and answered solemnly, "Yes, mother, I will."

Never was promise better kept. In every plan of Philomela's for the future, the thought of her little sister had the first place; while, in turn, the child followed her every motion with loving eyes, and if she lost sight of her, called, "Phily! Phily! Phily!" like the tender note of a young bird.

After making her resolution to try and rise in the world, Philomela woke early the next morning and lay with little Rosann in her arms, in the turn-up bedstead that fastened back to the kitchen wall by day, counting up her possessions that would adorn the tea-table when the minister came to supper—the four silver spoons, the china teapot, the two flowered plates, the good tablecloth.

“And, oh,” she thought, “we must tap the maples the very first warm day; and then, if I *should* have company, I shall be sure of having sugar!”

III.

THE CATECHISM.

THE maple-sugar making was, in some respects, a great success, owing largely to Lafayette. He was a fairly good boy, obstinate and dull when his interest was not wakened, but ready and skillful when it was roused.

At the first sign of a "good sap-day," Lafayette borrowed an auger, and began tapping the trees, and hanging the sap-buckets.

He set up the big iron kettle with his father's help, out-of-doors, and made ready to light a fire beneath it, as soon as there should be sufficient sap to boil, with dry branches torn off and scattered everywhere by the tornado of the September before.

Like many of the poorer families in the neighborhood, the Mills household had lived through the winter almost entirely on bean-porridge and potatoes.

"A shoemaker," said Mr. Mills, "can't stop to raise corn; and being rheumatic and having large taxes, I had to sell my cow."

But now a bag of rye meal was bought, to be made into pancakes, and oh, how delicious the

taste of the maple-syrup, poured over them! It vanished like dew in the sun. Phily, "boiling down" in her mother's small brass kettle, hung in the kitchen fireplace, trembled lest she could not keep the little store of sugar that she made.

She put it in a birch-bark box, and hid the sweet temptation first in one place, then in another, afraid that Lafayette would find and plead for it, and knowing her own weakness to resist him.

At last, one day when Rosann was asleep, she started off with it to Mrs. Moony's.

She found Mrs. Moony alone in the kitchen. She sat down on the long settle and waited, hardly knowing how to put in words what she had to say.

"What is it, Phily?" asked Mrs. Moony kindly.

"I don't know as I'd ought to ask," said Phily, "but I've made some sugar, and I don't know where to keep it, and I want to have it ready, just supposing I should have company; and if he finds it, it's hard to deny Lafayette, he's *so* fond of sugar!"

"Boys always are, like black ants," said Mrs. Moony. "Let's see it — it's nice — very light and clean!" she exclaimed, well pleased as she looked at the child's treasure. "I'll keep it with mine, and no one shall touch it;" and she smiled approvingly on the little girl.

Phily thanked her, but still sat soberly look-

ing into the fire ; there was something more she longed, yet dreaded to ask.

"I've heard," she began, "people ought to make the most of what they *have* ; and we *do have* a good little garden-spot near our house. But my father has rheumatism, and shoes to make, so that most springs he's behindhand in planting, and so nothing grows well ; and I've thought *this* year, if I could have somebody get the ground ready in time, I and Lafayette could plant and take care of it, and have string-beans and cucumbers like other folks ; and I'll pay for the plowing myself, just as soon as the berries grow for me to pick. I can't pay till then."

Mrs. Moony had seated herself on the settle. Now she took Phily's little hard hand in her own plump soft ones. She delayed answering an instant, that she might think before she spoke.

"The berries may not grow, Phily," she said. "My husband says, 'If it is possible not to run in debt, one never should.' But I will see, myself, that your garden is plowed and harrowed, and will help you about your seeds, if you will learn the Assembly's Catechism, so that you can say it perfectly from beginning to end."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Phily, "I'd ought to learn *that* anyway. I know part of it now. I shall *want* to pick the berries, too!"

"You must do what *I* wish," said Mrs. Moony, like one used to authority ; "I am *glad*

to have you learn the Catechism. It is a shame it is not taught in the schools as it used to be. The Methodists are spreading *everywhere*; and they say there is a new kind of Baptists *here* now, and that the woman who lives on the Smith lot belongs to them, and has meetings at her house, and talks and prays in them herself!"

"O, how dreadful!" exclaimed Phily, sincerely shocked. "I pity her little girls. I've seen one of them; she's almost my size."

"*Let seeing be enough!*" returned Mrs. Moony judicially. "And then politics are shamefully corrupt. Why, my own cousin, Doctor Todd, has left going to meeting because our minister is a good Christian Federalist; and he will not come to our house because he knows what the Squire and I think of his Democratic party. And men have grown dishonest. Daniel Webster, a wise good man that we have sent to Congress, is troubled about the affairs of the whole country. He thinks it is in a deplorable state. You do well to have a garden, Phily. My husband says 'Folks must look to their land!' Business now, he says, 'is a tub with the bottom out!' There's daily bread in planting and hoeing, and I am glad you try to look forward and make wise plans."

Phily went home with a pleased sense of having accomplished her mission. But she was sorry not to feel free to make friends with the two little girls on the Smith lot; and she won-

dered what Mrs. Moony *would* say if she were to know that every few weeks Doctor Todd brought the *New Hampshire Patriot* (which was the newspaper of the Democrats of the State) to their house for her father to read!

In just a week Phily returned, Primer in hand, sure she knew her Catechism perfectly, to its last "if and and." She was prouder yet of bringing with her little Rosann, who, her blue eyes shining, her cheeks aglow, her little form trembling with the joy of achievement, burst breathlessly forth as soon as Mrs. Moony opened the door:

"Man teef en gofy God, doy im fevver. Man teef en"—

Mrs. Moony caught her up in her arms. "You good child!" she cried. She carried her in and feasted her, and Phily too, on dry sponge-cake, of which she had almost always some remnant, a fresh loaf being in reserve for company.

The willing Phily was not permitted to recite. "Why should I *hear* you?" asked Mrs. Moony. "I *know* you have learned it, or you would not have come with your Primer. And I am very glad for what you have taught the baby, though she cannot understand it at all now, and never fully in this life. That is the way God teaches *us*." Mrs. Moony was not a great woman, but for the moment a great thought made her so.

IV.

"COVERING UP."

THE eighth presidential election was drawing near. That spring State politics were more exciting than ever. Even the plowing of George Mills's garden was affected by it.

"You went too far!" said her father to Phily. "You've been too forward. I was sorry to have Doctor Todd see the Moony oxen plowing my land! He's left off going to meeting, he's so bitter with the Feds; and the Squire is as bad as he — when he had a sick turn he sent ten miles for old Doctor Hill rather than be bled by a Democrat. *I* don't want to be counted on one side or the other."

But Phily's father was not, after all, unmindful of kindness; and with the sudden activity of the delaying man, for the first time he hastened forward the planting himself, forgetting all about long-promised shoes and almost barefoot customers.

Phily was an eager helper; and when the work was done she looked around the place as if it were a new Eden. How beautiful seemed the brown earth beds, and the brush-marked

rows for the peas! How she longed to see the green leaves peeping from the ground!

But — what was the matter with the month of May?

The little birds sat on the branches with their feet hid in their feathers, and sang spiritless spring songs. The apple boughs put forth buds that would not open. The unwatered grass-sward had no freshness, and the violets were few and wan.

Phily went round the garden again and again, day after day, before she could see that any of the seeds had come up; and, when they did, the pale young plants seemed without the power of growth.

"It's the spots on the sun that make the trouble," said Doctor Todd, one morning, finding Phily gazing mournfully at some luckless beets, while little Rosann stood near by, in hood and mittens; "the third of May you could see them with the naked eye. The spots make the bad weather, and I suppose Cousin Moony thinks the Democrats cause the spots! *We* make all the trouble, and the Federalists are good patriots! Oh, yes!"

Doctor Todd was a lonely old bachelor, living with an elderly and widowed sister. Naturally he missed the friendly cheer of the old-time calls on his Moony cousins, and was all the bitterer for missing them.

With June came a few days of oppressive heat, but sweltering little Phily did not mind

them. They proved that the spots on the sun were not all-powerful. The apple-buds all burst into bloom together, and the trees looked like silver clouds.

The garden-beds, which with aching arms she had watered so many times from the deep well by the house, began to look green and fair, and her pumpkin-vines were larger and more thrifty than any she had seen anywhere.

"It's a great way off," thought Phily, her ambitious dream ever before her mind; "yet if I do have to wait till pumpkin-pie season, that would be a good time to have the minister's visit."

But, suddenly, one afternoon, there was another change in the weather. It was not the coming of the much-needed rain she had watched for so anxiously. There was a strange chill in the air instead of a warm glow in the sky. Could it be the frost was coming back? Phily realized then that a great deal depended on their little garden-plot.

Within doors their store of salted meat was long since exhausted. Their supply of meal could last but a little longer; and the dried beans and peas, which she had hoped would be sufficient till the new ones came, were almost gone. Thrifty little housekeeper as she had already learned to be, she was glad to have her father away for a few weeks, making shoes in some of the more distant farm-houses, since,

even if his earnings were to go to pay old debts, his absence would "save the provisions."

"Oh, what *shall* we do if a killing frost comes and spoils the garden?" she asked of herself.

"Lafayette! Lafayette!" she called, "we've got to cover up again!"

"Cover up!" repeated the reluctant boy. "Who ever *heard* of 'covering up' so late as this?"

"It isn't what I've *heard*, but what I *feel*," answered Phil, shivering like a leaf, in her low-bodied linen short-gown.

Darting into the house, she began to gather together the old garments and worn-out quilts, with which they had before protected the springing plants from the frost. This time she added to them little Rosann's yellow petticoat, and Lafayette's woolen bed-coverlet, and her own checked shawl. Nothing seemed too good to use to keep alive as many as possible of the precious bean-vines. She filled with glowing coals the foot-stove which she carried to meeting on winter Sundays, and put it under the quilt, which she had fastened like a tent over the finest of her pumpkin vines.

When they had done all that could be done to "save the garden," the two children, blue and shivering with cold, went into the house and heaped anew the kitchen fireplace, and sat down together in its fierce glow to warm themselves.

Life looked hard, indeed, to the little girl of

eleven years; and then she thought of her namesake bird, and that now was the time for her to make melody in the darkness, although perhaps her efforts would sound to Lafayette more like preaching than song.

"We must not be discouraged, Lafayette," she began, "whatever happens around us. Through all our troubles we must *keep right on*, moved by something strong within us, just as do those strange puffing boats they have now on the rivers in York State."

"I wish't I could see one of 'em," said Lafayette. "I dreamed I did the other night. 'Twas trying to come up the Pemigewasset in freshet-time; and it kept on till it reached the falls, and *then* it went — smash! on the rock."

"But *we* sha'n't smash; we shall overcome, if we try and do all we can, Lafayette," Philly said, anxious to bring her moral to the front.

"I don't know about that," returned Lafayette stubbornly. "I'm terrible tired of eatin' dandelion greens and no meat with 'em; and I guess you'll find to-morrow there ain't much of anything left in the garden," he added, his disbelief in coming frost having evidently weakened. Then, with the air of a stoic, he mounted the ladder that led to the open loft overhead where he slept in summer, while Philly fed the fire anew to make up for the warmth of the missing coverlet.

In her bureau-drawer there was a little brown book that Doctor Todd had brought with the

Patriot that very morning, because he was sure Phily would like to read it.

"There's music in it, Phily," he said ; " there's music in it."

But his young listener did not feel sure about that. Philomela had once heard the minister tell what an exceedingly wonderful book was "*Paradise Lost*;" and when one day she had found it on Mrs. Moony's table she had asked if she might read a little in it, and she did not think it interesting at all.

But to-night she lighted a pine-knot, and, wrapping the book in a cloth to keep it from soil, she sat down on the clean-swept hearth and began to read — and, lo! she was Phily no more. She was a deer flying from the hunter; or again, she was the rider himself, following the fleet creature on his gray horse; and now she was a beautiful girl guiding a little boat; and —

"Phily! Phily! Phily!"

There was one voice which could break the spell of even the "*Wizard of the North*." Little Rosann had wakened, and found herself alone in the bed; and Phily heaped the fire once more, and lay down and comforted the loving little child.

V.

THE DOOR-STEP BARGAIN.

IN the morning the mountains were white as if with snow. The sky was of a cold steely-gray. The jewel-weeds, always first to yield to the cold, hung limp and lifeless over the brook, itself fringed with thin ice, while the ground in many places was stiff with frost. As for her garden — Phily did not even dare to go out and lift the covers to look at it.

She put on her ragged shoes and started for Mrs. Moony's. It was almost an instinct with her to go to Mrs. Moony's in any emergency; partly, perhaps, because the Squire's wife had the manner, so charming to a little girl, of treating her affairs with the same serious attention she would show to those of a grown person.

Mrs. Moony gave Phily much good advice in housekeeping matters, and remembered her by many simple favors and much neighborly help. But she never offered her any larger gifts.

"That would be only helping her father, and make him more easy-going than ever," she said to her husband. Though at all times

speaking of him respectfully to his family, Mr. and Mrs. Moony, always strong and prosperous themselves, secretly hardened their hearts against George Mills and Lafayette, too, who closely resembled him.

To-day when Philomela reached the door of the back-porch it was opened by a strange, red-faced old woman, in yellow petticoat and blue short-gown.

"They're *gone!*" she began, in a loud, screaming voice, as if she were speaking to the deaf. "They're *gone*, *he* and *she*, *both* of 'em — gone down by the sea, to Hampton; and they won't be back till the property's settled, for there's somebody dead and there's property! And he was all in a hurry to start, and she had to pack as she could; and she said if a girl came for skim-milk to give it to her!"

Phily, thankful that Mrs. Moony had not forgotten her, held out the brown pitcher she had brought with her.

"*Ain't* this weather!" said the woman, as she handed it back; "*ain't* this *weather* for the seventh of June!"

Oh, it *was* weather!

The visitation of the night before had proved to be less of a frost than a freeze. The air kept its relentless cold all the forenoon, and flakes of snow were falling, blown about by passing gusts.

Under a clump of sweet fern, as she went homeward with her pitcher of skim-milk, Phily

chanced to spy a little brown bird sitting on its nest, so benumbed with cold that without a flutter it willingly suffered her to carry it away, nest and all, to safer shelter.

Looking down, lest she should drop her bird, or spill her milk, she was trudging along, when some one rode up beside her. It was Doctor Todd, on his old black horse, a faithful creature that knew every crook and turn of all the roads and by-ways of the region.

"Well, Phily," he said, trying to appear jovial, "do you know what year it is? The boys say it is eighteen hundred and froze-to-death."

"It's near froze-to-death for this little bird," said Phily, setting down the pitcher, and lifting up the nest for him to see. "Poor little thing! What can I do for it?"

"Bleed it twice a day, and give it calomel. That's the way the wise men in Philadelphia cure sick folks," was the answer; and smiling grimly, the Doctor rode on.

Not alone was Doctor Todd at variance with many of his old friends on matters of politics, but it was a time when all through the land physicians were quarreling, often with the greatest personal bitterness, in regard to blood-letting and the use of mercury. The very name of calomel or the lancet roused heated discussion among the doctors, while, in politics and religious creeds, in 1816, even the children took sides, and hotly held their own. "I am a Federalist," said Phily, "but no so strong as some."

For four days there was little change in the strange weather. The sun was not seen; the snow remained on the hills, and the air was piercing. Sheep, newly shorn, perished in the pastures; barefoot children, sent on errands, came back with frost-bitten toes; the beautiful purple martins lay dead by the bird-houses that had sheltered them, and chickens and turkeys, straying from their coops, came to an untimely end. The foliage of the trees lost all its freshness, even when not destroyed by the frost. The hot fires of winter burned on the hearths, and on Sunday the church-goers all wore their winter clothes.

George Mills came home on Saturday of that week, and brought a bag of corn to be boiled and hulled. But he could get no more. "Folks have it," he said, "but they're saving it against a hard time coming, and I'm afraid it *will* be *hard* enough. If I'd known it afore, I should have tried to have hurried more in my work and got something ahead."

The severity of the cold weather continued from the sixth to the eleventh of June. Then, after another heavy frost, the summer seemed to have returned.

Phily brought in, once more, the coverings she had spread in the garden. She bemoaned that the glowing color of Rosann's yellow petticoat was gone forever, and that Lafayette's bedspread was stained beyond remedy.

However, the rescued beans and potatoes

stood green again in the glad light of the sun, and the treasured pumpkin-vines, doubly shielded from the cold, looked almost as vigorous as in other years.

"We have lost so much, we must take great pains with what is left, Lafayette," said Phily. "We must see that the garden is well watered till a rain comes;" and she patiently turned the crank of the deep well with her little arms, looking to see if there were any black clouds of promise in the west.

But whenever the black clouds appeared they only brought "dry squalls," followed by variable weather; now cold, when Lafayette wore mittens to hoe his corn; now glowing hot, when Phily's pumpkin vines, almost the only ones left in the region, burst into a splendor of golden bloom, which made brightness for the little girl's heart.

Phily, if she looked at the dark side of life, had surely enough to discourage her. She was only eleven years old, but the cares of the future were as real to her as to the bread-winner of a family. When the cold drouth of June had continued almost through July, she knew without asking that the corn crop was ruined; and that this loss would make all other grain both high and scarce. And how could her father provide for them then, when a bag of wheat or corn was so hard to get and cost so much already, and lasted so little time? And if her father should be sick and could earn no money

or provisions, and if they did not have some apples and beans, or peas and corn, as they usually did, how could she ever take proper care of little Rosann?

"The baby is pale and thin now; if she could have warm new milk she would be better again," she said to herself one morning, as she sat down in the open door, not knowing that she, too, was worn and tired, and even hungry — for the poor little cook always gave to the others the best. She covered her face with her hands and wept.

Her father had just left the house, silent and gloomy, as was his way when he felt fearful of the future. He had dropped, for the time, his work on shoes, to join the haymakers, now gathering in hastily the scanty crop of grass lest it should be dried to utter worthlessness.

"With the limp in my leg I can't earn much — but what I do earn I shall take in provisions, if I can, to lay up ahead. Folks must eat," he had said as he went away.

Every house had its dooryard then. There was a sound of the gate swinging back: "Sister," said a strange voice; and Phily, lifting her head, saw a little dark-complexioned woman in a long-waisted gown, and a light-green handkerchief tied round her neck.

With inward shrinking, Phily knew at once that she must be "the woman who prayed."

The little girl courteously asked her in, but the woman declined. "I'd rather stay here,"

she said; and the two sat down together on the doorstep. She had a pleasant, kindly face; but Phily gave her only a glance, remembering Mrs. Moony's injunction with regard to the woman's daughter: "Let seeing be enough."

"I've come," said the woman, "because you are of the schooling age and would be like to know, to ask if you can tell me whether there is going to be any school here or not? It's July, and I go out to work, and take in weaving and spinning; and my two girls, nine and six, are going back'ards instead of for'ards in their schooling."

"Well, all I know," answered Phily, "is that I've heard that folks are so poor they can't raise any money for teaching. The minister hain't been paid what the town owes him yet, and now that the frosts are cutting off all the crops they can't *pay* for schools."

"If people believed in a free gospel, as I do, perhaps the children might have a better chance," said the woman aggressively. "There wouldn't be so many *paid* ministers. For my part, I'm willing to work and earn my children's schooling. I want them to have more book-learning than I have."

Suddenly Phily sat up very straight; her eyes grew very bright. "*I* have some book-learning," she said. "I have read the Bible through two times — the last time, name-chapters and all. Of, course no one knows just what to call some of the names."

"I guess not," agreed the woman.

"And," went on Phily, "I own a Morse's geography and a Walsh's arithmetic, that were my own father's — my name isn't Mills, it's Winn. And I am a good speller — they called me so at school; and I can say my tables perfect, and I can write — yes, I can teach writing; and if you will send your children to me I will see that they are well-taught; and you have a cow, and can pay me in milk."

The woman looked astonished. "I don't know," she said; "you are no bigger than my biggest girl. I've heard say you were eleven."

"But I'd do my best," said Phily, anxiously. "I should be so glad of some new milk. You see, our baby, little Rosann, I'm afraid needs it. I don't like to see her so thin and white;" and here Phily's dignity suddenly gave way in a kind of long, sobbing cry.

"You poor little lamb!" said the woman, and clasped her in her arms. "I will do all I can to help you. I was a motherless child myself! You are going to have the milk!"

VI.

HOW PHILY "TEACHED."

So Phily fitted up the spare room with three straight-back chairs, and "taached."

Her two pupils, Rachel and Sabrina Dyer, were well-behaved, truthful children. They wore yellow-brown, copperas-colored aprons tied around their necks, and were instructed, by their mother, to "mind the schoolma'am;" while Phily, always conscious that she had sought her position, tried her utmost to fill it with success.

If she had her pupils spend much time in reading the Bible — what else would they so often have occasion to read aloud? If they repeated, over and over, the same tables in arithmetic — they were those most needed in daily life. Their spelling lessons were carefully studied beforehand by the teacher; and, when it came to writing, she followed the copies with them — these were kindly provided by the friendly hand of Doctor Todd.

"I want to be honest, Mrs. Dyer," said little Philomela, "and have you feel that your children get all the learning they ought to, for what you pay. When they sew patchwork I read to

them in Morse's Geography and ask questions afterwards; and Rachel has learned to make beautiful button-holes, but Sabrina is young and inclines to take long stitches."

"Have I complained?" returned Mrs. Dyer. "No, Phily; when the children bring home their writing to show, I often think how glad I should be now, if I'd had their chances when I was young;" and she looked off, with the wistful gaze of one who is seeing the power of knowledge in which she has no part.

The minister, going by, stepped in one morning, and in his grave, gracious way spoke most encouragingly to Philomela, complimented the efforts of her pupils, and presented each of them with a copy of the New England Primer.

The Primers were promptly brought back the next day.

"Our mother," said Rachel, "wants me to say that she believes the Bible from cover to cover; but the Catechism she don't hold to, and never shall, and ain't willing we should; and she wants you should carry the Primers back to the minister, and tell him so. *She* believes in a *free* gospel."

And then the frightened Phily turned pale; and little Rosann seeing her, put up her lip and began to cry, and the Dyer girls sat down in solemn silence. A great black cloud of religious warfare seemed hanging over little Phily's spare-room.

Phily absently listened to Sabrina's spelling

lesson, and with forced smiles hushed little Rosann's grief; and when at last the baby dropped asleep, she bade her scholars sew while she was gone, and put on her bonnet and hurried off to the house where Mrs. Dyer was spinning, a quarter of a mile away.

The road, from the drouth, seemed like a bed of ashes; and Phily, in a cloud of dust, flew along like a spirit. Mrs. Dyer chanced to see her coming, and hurried out to meet her, fearing something terrible had happened.

"Oh, Mrs. Dyer!" Phily began; "I can't, I *can't* carry the books back! I'm sorry about the New England Primers, but I hope you don't feel hard toward the minister. If a person *thinks* it's their duty to do what isn't their duty, isn't it as much their duty to do it, as if it *was* their duty? And Mr. Wright was very kind in speaking of the school, and he praised the children to me, and said they were exceeding well-mannered, and remarkable readers for their age."

Mothers are mothers all the world over; and the praise of her children, even if she did not believe in the minister's creed, was sweet to Mrs. Dyer.

"Well, Phily," she said at last, "I don't want to hurt you nor your school. If I keep the Primers I shall cut out the Catechism part and burn it."

Little Phily did not speak. "It is a dreadful thing she is going to do, but fire cannot

make the trouble that words might," was the child-teacher's reasoning.

"You've been so good to me!" she broke forth at length. "I want everybody to love you too, Mrs. Dyer."

"No matter about *that*, Phily; we mustn't try *too* hard to please folks. What would the old prophets have amounted to, if they had thought all the time, 'What will people say?'"

It was with the joy of the peacemaker that little Phily hurried home. And thereafter her school seemed to prosper more than before; for the Dyer girls, unconsciously moved by the minister's praise, read louder and clearer than ever, and sat stiff and erect in their chairs, because they had been called "exceeding well-mannered."

Doctor Todd, bringing the *Patriot*, came to the door one morning, and found little Rosann dancing round the schoolroom in ill-timed rapture.

"Here's one little girl has no studying to do and can be spared," he said; and catching her up, folded her in a warm wrap lying in his chaise, and carried her away to ride—forgetting, in the joy of giving joy, that he was lonely and growing old and at variance with his pleasant kinsfolk, the Moonys.

"You're *my* little girl now," he said, when he brought her home; and the child ever after used to watch for his coming and wave her tiny hands to welcome his approach.

VII.

ON HUCKLEBERRY MOUNTAIN.

BETWEEN the cold and the drouth that year, it seemed strange that any green thing lived. Poor Phily every day walked round the garden she had planted so hopefully in the spring; and at last she was forced to see the bean-vines hanging withered on their poles, the corn-blades dry and rolled, and the cucumber vines sprawling on the ground with yellow leaves and blighted fruit.

Still, "making the most of what she had," with nubbins of corn and small potatoes she added some variety to their simple fare, while Lafayette, skillful in such matters, sometimes brought in a snared partridge or a catch of fish. Besides, strange as it may seem, high-bush huckleberries grew that season in many places in large quantities; and the little housewife closed her school for a fortnight's vacation that the Dyer girls might pick a supply. Another day Sabrina cared for Rosann, and Phily and Lafayette went with Mrs. Dyer and Rachel up to the mountain where they grew.

Sometime in the afternoon, after wandering

in different directions, "a thick place" brought them near each other again.

"I've heard," said Rachel, like a true berry-picker not stopping her work or lifting her head while she talked, "that there are whole families up in the east part of the State that are living on scarcely anything but huckleberries, and that they've been living on 'em for almost two weeks."

"And I've heard," said Lafayette, "that a man that's brother to a man the stage-driver knows walked twenty miles to get some work, and worked all day and walked back in the night, and only earned just one peck of corn!"

"And the cattle will die, and the sheep," said Rachel. "If it don't rain soon all the springs will dry up, and all the feed will wither up, and they'll starve."

"Well, *people* will have to starve *too*, then!" said Lafayette; "such folks as don't have money to buy and haven't raised anything to eat. Nobody will have anything to give away!"

"The towns won't see people starve, Lafayette," said Mrs. Dyer. "*They'll* raise money and buy food; and then if the poor folks have land the town will hold some claim on it probably."

Phily looked up and stopped picking. It was dreadful to be pinched for food; and it seemed dreadful, too, to be helped by the town and to get in debt.

The little place where they lived her own

father had bought with the first earnings of his manhood. He had died not owing any man a shilling. But her stepfather was less careful. He already had lost his bass-viol and a good timepiece by borrowing money that he had not been able to repay.

"Famine or no famine, *I* want to keep out of debt," said Phily, greatly disturbed, to Mrs. Dyer. "My mother's great-uncle, a good Christian man, owed a hundred and seventy dollars and went to prison for debt; and he died in the prison on a hard straw bed, in a room with no fire, and with nothing to drink but cold water. I should hate to be owing the town!"

Mrs. Dyer looked at the little girl before she answered. Phily's face had grown pale, and her voice trembled.

"Well, Phily," said she, not thinking it wise to interrupt the berry-gathering with the hard questions of life, "it's wrong to worry. We've something to eat to-day, and I hope we shall have to-morrow. I don't think the apostles went about crying for fear of trouble ahead. They looked up'ard and pressed for'ard; and to-day I think we had better keep steady at our work and get all the huckleberries we can, for we must get home by sundown."

Half cheered, half rebuked, Phily made haste with the rest to pick all she could; and they returned with baskets heavy enough for present use and a portion to dry for winter. And

anxious to know what the worst would be like beforehand, she gave a double share of bread to Lafayette, and unseen ate a cheerless supper of huckleberries alone.

"I'm sure, Lafayette," she said, not ill-pleased with her own heroism, when the meal was over, "if times *are* hard, there is no use in giving up. As Mrs. Dyer said, 'the apostles didn't cry'—they kept on."

"Pottles din ky!" said little Rosann, all smiles on Phily's knee. "Pottles din ky!" and she patted her sister's cheeks with her soft hands, and Phily hugged her close and sang to her tenderly, and when she slept laid her in the turn-up bedstead.

Then Phily lighted a pine-knot, and sat down on the hearth, and went away to another world—a world of "purple peaks" and "flinty spires," where the air was sweet with the charmed music of winding horns and harps unseen; where the woodland wanderer proved to be his country's king; where the outlaw died bewept by his foe-man, and the lovers loved to the end.

O, brave Sir Walter! it is said you are not counted among "the world's great poets" now; but who but you could have made a little lonely half-taught girl, worn and tired, sitting by her hearth-stone across the sea, evening after evening forget herself and all beside in the witchery of your verse, and when she came back again to common life be all the better and truer for having read it!

VIII.

THE TROUBLE IN PHILY'S SCHOOL.

DUST-COVERED from the long stretch of road over which they had passed, Squire Moony and his wife at last reached home.

It had been a dreary ride. The heavy frosts of the last week of August, closely following one another, had completed the ruin of the few patches of corn which had eared; and all along the road they saw blackened gardens, brown fields, and pastures where the cattle could find only poor and scanty feed and had to go long distances to reach water.

Owing to the scarcity of seed from the scanty harvest of the year before, little wheat had been sown in the spring; and the only good crop of any kind was that of rye—the grain of the poor, flourishing best in sandy soil and under cold skies.

Mr. Moony was a good farmer; and it made him feel gloomy, as he rode along, to see the lean oxen and horses, and the little, half-starved colts and calves.

But though Squire Moony was a kindly

man, he could not resist a thought that came to him. It was going to be a very hard winter. A great many of the newer settlers would have to sell their cleared lands for very little money to get enough for their families to eat; and those who bought could sell them again, when good years should come, for large prices; or they could cultivate them themselves, and raise beef and wool, and corn and flax, and make potash.

Mrs. Moony had felt anxious to get back to her own house. She had been forced to leave it in haste, in charge of a poor housekeeper, and she foresaw how much disorder she would find when she reached it. For her little neighbor Phily, too, she had had many a tender thought that dry summer; and the morning after her arrival she sent for the child to come and see her.

It was late in the afternoon when, having stopped (remembering she was a teacher) to let down a tuck in her best gown, and to curl her hair, she reached Mrs. Moony's side-door.

"You've had a hard time, haven't you, Phily?" said Mrs. Moony, greeting her fondly, and noticing how thin and sunburnt she looked.

"Yes, ma'am, I've had a *kind* of a hard time," was the answer; "but everybody has been good to me. Doctor Todd lent me a beautiful book, and has helped take care of the baby, mornings."

"Doctor Todd!" exclaimed Mrs. Moony, wonderingly.

"Yes, ma'am," said Phily; "he's taken Ro-

sann to ride often in his carriage, mornings, so that it was quiet when I had my school."

"Your school?" repeated Mrs. Moony, in even greater surprise.

"You see," said Phily, "Mrs. Dyer — she is the woman who prays and preaches in barns and house-meetings — wanted to have her children schooled, and I said I would school them, and she has paid me all we agreed, and made Rosann a Sunday gown out of a pair of old linen pillow-cases besides."

Mrs. Moony looked troubled. She made no comment for some minutes.

"I've felt anxious about you, Phily," she said, when she did speak. "I want you to be careful about the company you're in. We must simply keep *away* from whatever may lead us out of safe paths."

"But even bad children ought to be taught," said Phily; "and the Dyer girls couldn't have treated me with more respect if I'd been twenty years old; and the minister said they were 'exceeding well-mannered.'"

Mrs. Moony's face could not but soften. The minister's praise had great weight in the scales with which she weighed people.

"And Lafayette — was he a scholar too?" she asked.

Phily hesitated. "It's been a hard year," she said, "and father has had the rheumatism, it's been so cold this summer; but he's tried to keep at work all the time, and Lafayette has worked

too—but he said he couldn't look up to me enough to go to school, and I didn't urge him; I was afraid he couldn't."

"That was wise," answered Mrs. Moony, smiling; for she knew the ways of younger brothers. "And I've thought of your father too," she added, with a strange new sympathy in her tone. "I've had a pain in my joints all the time I was gone."

"But there *is* one thing," said Phily; "I don't want you to tell *anybody*—but just now I *am* having trouble in my school!"

"Of *course* you are," answered Mrs. Moony; "no good ever comes from having so much to do with such strange people."

"It isn't that," said little Phily; "it's *worse*. Sabrina is no care; she reads well, though she's slow in some ways. But Rachel—oh, you *never* saw anybody learn so fast! Every day she keeps wanting to have longer and longer lessons, and I have to keep studying out of school to be before her, and then my other work gets all behind. But now I've sat up late for three nights, and I'm sure I've got learning enough ahead of her to last till next Wednesday—and then the school has *got* to close. Rachel isn't to blame, and I shall miss my pay."

"But you are all worn out—I wouldn't wait till Wednesday," broke in Mrs. Moony, though she could not help smiling at the peculiar nature of the little teacher's "trouble." "I'd

rather pay you myself ; you'd better stop short to-morrow."

"Oh, I can't," said Phily; "I promised the Dyer girls a 'last day,' and they've asked some of their folks, and I've spoken to the minister, and looked up the pieces to read, and the copies to show, and I hope you and the Squire will both be there."

"I shall be there," answered Mrs. Moony; "the Squire has a great deal of business."

"And there's one thing more," said Phily. "It's been such a dreadful year that nobody has any pumpkins but me. When the well was dry I watered mine from the river, and six of them got ripe. I am going to take two of them now, and sell one for wheat-flour, and make the other into pies — one for the minister, and the rest to cut on the 'last day'; and I shall need the sugar you're keeping for me."

"*Don't you sell a pumpkin!*" enjoined Mrs. Moony; "the Squire says the seeds are worth money now. Bring one of them here, and I'll help make the pies."

Mrs. Moony was well pleased with the project. During her absence she had learned that Sunday house and barn meetings had drawn many hearers from the meeting-house services, and she thought that even a small gift from a child of his fold might cheer Mr. Wright by its kind thought. Besides, she dearly loved the triumphs of a cook, and really longed to help make Phily's pies.

Phily's lip quivered. "I'd thought, perhaps," she said, "I could do them all myself. Mr. Wright has been so good to us, and we've never had him to visit in our house, though I planned and planned and wanted to so much."

"But the pies will be just as much yours if they *are* baked in my oven," said Mrs. Moony; "and you'll want the minister to have a good crisp crust; and when you bring the pumpkin I'll give you a few little presents I have in my trunk for you and the baby."

And finally Phily promised to bring the pumpkin.

IX.

"LAST DAY."

THE "last day" was one both of triumph and relief to the little-girl teacher.

Mrs. Dyer, the mother of the pupils, came with two of her friends and her brother, Elder Smith, the chief leader of the barn meetings. Phily was honored by the presence of Mrs. Moony and the minister.

It was a cold day, but the spare-room was hung with evergreen wreaths; and the little bird Phily had rescued from the June frosts chirped, a willing captive, in a home-made cage on the window-seat; and a fire glowed in the fireplace.

Phily, very pale, and with stiff little curls each side of her face, stood by the stand-table and asked questions, all of which were promptly answered by her clear-voiced pupils. In Mrs. Moony's lap sat little Rosann, wrapped in a warm blue and white blanket-shawl which Mrs. Moony had given her, perfectly still, save when she caught some friendly eye; then she would lift one of the fringed corners, and rapturously say, "S'awl! s'awl!" and then be quiet again.

Rachel, who did not dream how nearly she had drained to its last drop Phily's scanty fountain of knowledge, rose above herself, and victoriously solved several "puzzlers" in arithmetic given out by her uncle, the Elder, who was fond of mathematics; and Sabrina won the special praise of Mrs. Moony by her fine reading of two of Dr. Watts's hymns for children. The writing copies were passable; and Rachel's patchwork received deserved praise, while Sabrina's was wisely kept out of sight.

At the close, the two ministers were invited to speak.

Elder Smith said he had felt it was good to be there; the young sister had the right idea of things. Mr. Wright, not to be outdone, very happily pleased both sides by saying that no teacher could have done so well without remarkably good pupils, and no pupils could have done so well without a remarkably good teacher.

"Phily's done well; and you must be proud of your daughters," said Mrs. Moony, a flag-of-truce friend, sitting down by Mrs. Dyer when the exercises were over.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Dyer, "they've all been good children together, if two of 'em *are* mine; and none of them will ever enjoy being *really* grown-up as much as they do *playing* they are now;" and she smiled at the little teacher and her pupils who, no longer awed by the presence of the ministers who had left early, were merrily chatting, and making

ready for the simple feast of doughnuts and "skim-milk cheese" brought by Mrs. Dyer, gingerbread from Mrs. Moony's, and the pumpkin-pies which were called "Phily's."

The pies were the glory of the festival.

"It isn't all the taste; they look so beautiful! so *beautiful!*" exclaimed Sabrina, gazing on them as she would have looked at a picture.

Mrs. Moony had taken for their making the best of her own materials, and had used her utmost skill; and by lavish use of eggs had succeeded in making five pies from a single small pumpkin!

There was enough for all to share; and Phily put two extra pieces in the cupboard for her father and Lafayette, who had shown much silent pride in his sister's success and borne with patience the rather inconvenient home-life the school had often caused.

As for the minister's pie — Phily carried it to him the next morning. She did not quite dare tell him it was not made by herself; and when truly touched by the thoughtful gift he warmly thanked her, and praised her housewifely skill, neither praise nor thanks seemed to the little girl to be rightfully hers.

"It's just as I thought," she mournfully said to herself, as she went home; "it's just as I thought it would be! Mrs. Moony has been so good, but somehow I'd always wanted to make *that* pie all myself!"

There was still one pie more, a smaller one;

and this Phily carried next morning to the “Todd house,” on the hill. She rapped with the big brass knocker on the door, which was opened by Doctor Todd himself, just ready for a drive; and when Phily lifted the napkin from the plate, he knew at once the maker of the pie.

“You’re a dear child, Phily! a dear child!” he said, looking down in her eyes, “but that pie wasn’t made by your little hands. I’ve seen Mrs. Squire Moony’s pies before! *She* wouldn’t want me to eat this.”

Phily cried out, “O yes, Doctor Todd, she would! she would! She *told* me to give it to you. She said she was sorry that you were a Democrat, but that you had a *very* kind heart, and though she blamed you she still held you dear underneath!” And Phily wondered why it was that such a half-amused, half-tender look came over the Doctor’s careworn face, and never knew that she had sown the first seed of renewed friendship and happier days where, before long, it would spring up and blossom.

“I love Mrs. Dyer,” said Phily to her father, when after her return home she was once again putting things in their old places in the spare-room; “she has been so kind to me! and I shall never, *never* tell any one but you what she said the ‘last day’ — that she hoped and believed the time was coming when girls would speak pieces in school as well as boys! How could she have said that!”

X.

LITTLE ROSANN'S MISSION.

NEVER, in all their weary years, had the oldest men and women known such a dreary September.

"This is a year of poverty; God grant it may not be to some a year of starvation," they said, with concern, one to another.

Everywhere the water was failing; the river, almost shrunk to a brook, forced its way along among the rocks; most of the wells were dry, and the foliage of the woodland trees, touched by the frost, had grown sear without any of the glory of autumn. The thirsty cattle, leaping over walls and hooking down fences, wandered long distances in search of water. All the day the air was thick with smoke; and at night one could see against the sky the red light of distant hillside forests in flames.

In Philomela's garden, where the beans and corn and potatoes had come to nothing, the land had been replanted with the seed of small flat turnips, which, if rain should fall, would be of great value for food; but there was no sign of approach of rain in the clear cold sky. There

was nothing bright to see on the whole place, save one little tree which, defiant of frost and drouth, was covered on every bough with small, hard, crimson apples.

Phily, paler than usual, was standing under it, one afternoon. She knew that everything that could be saved must be saved, and she had been gathering even the seeds of some tall weeds that she thought might serve as a winter's breakfast for the few fowls they were hoping to keep till another spring.

"Good afternoon, Philomela!" She knew the minister's voice before she looked up.

"I cannot come in now," he said, as she went to the gate to receive him; "but I shall hasten to do so, for I think of you all, and I know how great must be your sorrow!"

The little girl, her apron full of her poor gleanings, raised her earnest eyes to his. "I've thought of what you told me, Mr. Wright," she said; "I've *tried* to remember about the bird that sings in the dark. You see, little Rosann was only three, and all she ever knew about living was just being loved. Father and Lafayette were always carrying her round, and picking berries and flowers for her, and I—oh, she was such a *dear* little thing! and now, only so much more beautiful, *don't* you think, Mr. Wright, that it will be always something the same with the Lord and the angels to love her, and my mother *so* glad to see her again?"

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven,' we

know," said the minister tenderly; "I, too, am glad for little Rosann, and I think the child had her own sweet mission on earth."

It was a mission of peace. When, after a few days of seemingly painless sickness, her little fluttering spirit found its wings, it was the partisan doctor, the puritan preacher, the ambitious Mrs. Moony, and the unyielding Mrs. Dyer, who gathered with the sorrowing household, and all bitterness passed never to return.

But it was Elder Smith, Mrs. Dyer's brother, to whom it was given to widen the circle of friendly sympathy.

"Here's the drouth," he said; "the Orthodox folks have gathered in their meeting-house and prayed for rain by *themselves*, and we've gathered in my barn and prayed for rain by *ourselves*, and the weather has grown worse and worse; and now I think all the town-folks, saints and sinners, had better get together by the side of the river that's all drying up, and ask for help from the Lord who sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

The next Monday, from all the farm-houses round, men and women, knowing that the harvest was lost but fearful of the added terror of a winter with no supply of water, moved by their common need, met where the rocks by the river-side gave place to a long stretch of hard and glittering sand, to send up a heartfelt prayer for the coming of "the latter rain."

It was Mr. Wright who stood on the one high

rock, and read from the old prophets of the "Heavens stayed from dew, and the earth from her fruit;" of "cattle perplexed because they had no pasture," and of "harvests perished."

And it was Elder Smith who made the "long prayer;" his voice a sound to dread when in some small house-meeting it was shut in by roof and walls, but which now above the murmur of the narrow stream and the sound of the wind in the pines rose clear and distinct in petition for deliverance from danger.

And the prayer was heard. Before the forenoon had passed, there was a slight change, a growing moisture in the air; then a few fine misty drops; and then, gathering slowly, came down the rain, the rain!

Once again through the region was heard the rush of the river and the music of the tinkle of the brook; the small flat turnips flourished in the fields, and a warm moist October gave better pasturage to the cattle than they had had in all the long summer.

Still, there were few families who did not regard the coming on of winter with anxiety.

XI.

UNCLE SILAS.

EVERYWHERE the price of grain steadily increased. Many of the poorer families knew that they would be obliged to call upon the town for assistance before spring, unless helped by private charity.

"Folks," said young Rachel Dyer, "needn't be so afraid. They say Squire Moony has fallen heir to lots and lots of money, and that he'll take what they call 'morgridges,' and give folks all the money they need."

And Phily answered, "I love Mrs. Moony and the Squire — they've been so good to me; but my own father, who died when I was a baby, told my mother he was more afraid of debts than *anything* else — 'twas *so* easy to get in 'em and *so* hard to get out of 'em; but, of course," she added, "people will *have* to borrow, if they have cattle and no hay; it must be the dreadfulest thing in the world for poor creatures to be hungry and stand tied up."

Rachel had just come over, bringing a bunch of marigolds to put in little Rosann's mug, as she loved to do, and Phily looked at them with misty eyes.

She, herself, was sitting by the window of the kitchen, trying to mend the long woolen frock her father wore when working out of doors in winter, and a troublesome patch kept her very busy after Rachel left.

She wished to finish it before he and Lafayette, who were drawing in wood with Elder Smith's horse, should come back and think it was supper-time.

She was just taking the last stitch when the door softly and slowly opened, and — how *could* it be? — in came her father, dressed in a new coat with brass buttons, handsome shoes, and a fur-bordered cap!

"Why, father! father!" she cried; "where *did* you get your new clothes? I thought you and Lafayette were out with old Canter, drawing wood. How could you have got them?"

Her father gave her a pleasant smile, took a long look round the room, and sat down in the big chair by the fireplace. "I bought 'em," was the answer.

"But how *could* you?" persisted Phily. "Didn't they cost a great deal?" she added anxiously.

"Cost enough," was the answer, cheerfully spoken, as if spending money were not the dreadful thing that Phily thought. She did not ask any more questions. George Mills had a kindly disposition, but he was one who liked to "keep his affairs to himself;" and in those days both children and women were expected to

hold far above their own wishes and opinions those of the men of the family.

With troubled face, little Phily started to put by the mended garment, when the door swung in, and her father appeared again — this time in his short tow frock and patched breeches.

He gave a half-dazed look at the man sitting by the fire, and then, "Why, Silas! Why, Silas! Why, Silas!" he said, over and over; and the two men were clasped in each other's arms — and but for their clothes Phily could never have told which of the two was her step-father; while Lafayette, waiting with the horse outside, and hearing the strange sounds, came rushing in, and seemed like a queer little copy of them both.

Phily's first thought, like a true housekeeper's, was of the coming supper. Grateful, after all, that the "last day pies" were made from Mrs. Moony's materials, she melted some of her little store of maple sugar into syrup, and baked some rye drop-cakes before the fire.

Afterward, when the dusk came down, the twin-brothers sat by the red blaze of the hearth and talked until late into the night; while Lafayette, with wondering eyes and parted mouth, sitting between them on a low stool, looked first at his father and then at his uncle, and listened.

"It doesn't seem as it used to in New Hampshire," said Silas; "the land all the way along didn't seem to me to have borne any good crops."

"It does, common seasons," answered George; "but this they call the 'poverty year.' We've had snows and blows and frosts and drouth all summer long—in fact, we've had no summer!"

"We've a better climate and better soil in New York," said Silas. "They're beginning to settle fast in the Genesee flats now, and there they raise a hundred bushels of corn to the acre! and wheat, rye, barley — *everything* in proportion!"

Silas Mills was a stronger man than his brother, and had a larger knowledge of the world.

He had learned the carpenter's trade, a good one in those days, when so much head and hand work went into the building of every house, and had found employment even in the troubled years through which the country had just been passing. His apprenticeship had been shared by a lad whose family lived in New York, and when they got their "freedom-papers" both young men had gone to that State. There Silas at first was exceedingly homesick; but from lack of money being forced to stay where he was, he grew used to his surroundings, and soon married a young Dutch girl and set up a home of his own.

"You can't grow peaches in New Hampshire," he said.

"Oh, yes!" cried Lafayette. "Squire Moony had a tree that one year had three on it; two good-sized ones!"

"A New Hampshire peach crop!" said Silas, laughing. "It isn't only the crops that help New York — it's the manufactories. We had a bad set-back in the war — the city shrunk three thousand in population; but now, if things go right in Congress, it seems as though all kinds of business might flourish. We've glassworks and powder-works, and forty-four cut-nail factories, and twenty-six cotton ones; and Governor Clinton is all heart and soul in working for canals."

And so he went on, and on, and on; and when, at last, the two brothers went away to sleep in the spare-room "bed-press" (a close little closet just large enough for a bed), they still could be heard talking, talking, long into the small hours of the night; and when Phily woke the next morning, she found Lafayette was already out in a field near-by, trying to dig a canal for a water-way between two small brooks.

XII.

PHILY FINDS A "PLACE."

SILAS MILLS had come on a mission. Some relatives of his wife had helped to form a new colony on the banks of the Mohawk, and he was intending to join them with his family before the opening of another spring. He expected not only to cultivate the soil but to find profitable work in building houses for the other settlers. A shoemaker would doubtless be needed there, and he was anxious to have his brother George return with him.

Toward Lafayette his heart at once had warmed. "He takes me back," he said, "to the time when *we* were youngsters, and used to play jokes on the neighbors — I as George, and George as I." It seemed to him that it would be a real delight to carry the little fellow back with him. But Silas's five children were all girls — there seemed no place or need for Phily in the New York State plan. And yet, where could she stay behind?

"I'm terrible perplexed," said her stepfather to Phily, "about what I ought to do. Silas is bound I shall go. *He* has prospered, and he

thinks *I* shall; and Lafayette — he's interested for him. He says he wants to have good schools for his own children, and my boy can have the same chance they do. But you — I don't want to leave *you*, Phily. You are a good, patient, industrious little girl, and you always have been."

George Mills was commonly a man of few words. His unexpected praise was sweet to Phily. It came back again and again to her through all her life.

"In these times," he went on, "folks will have to wear cobbled shoes instead of new ones. I can't earn much any way; and how would we get along here, Phily, if I had the rheumatism? But Silas says if I'm sick there, he'll look out for me and see to Lafayette."

"But what shall *I* do?" asked Phily, her voice trembling.

"Before I make any plans," her stepfather answered, "I am going to talk things over with the Squire. He likes money, but you can trust his word; and he knows more about business and what's going on in the country than any man here; and his wife has seemed fond of you, and I think he'll try and tell me what, in his judgment, will be best for us all."

"Father," said Phily, after a moment, "won't you ask Mrs. Moony if I may not come and work in her kitchen with Dolly her new girl for my board? Tell her I'll do the best I can if she'll take me. I'm sure she *will*, father, if you

ask her," she added, beginning to sweep the floor with the hemlock broom, and to put the rooms in order.

"I'll ask," said her father; and then he and Silas and Lafayette, who would follow wherever his father and uncle went, started off for the Squire's house.

Her half-brother, Lafayette, was now the only one close of kin whom Phily knew. It would be hard to lose him, and yet they were too near in age for him to value her advice. He needed some older person to direct him whenever his father was away at work. She would have this thought to comfort her should he go to New York.

When, after a two hours' stay, she saw them all returning cheerfully chatting together, she set the kettle she was carrying down on the hearth and hastened out to meet them.

"What did he say? *Are you going?*" she asked.

Her father gave a stern glance toward Lafayette, who was laughing, before he answered.

"The Squire says," he told her, "that he thinks the best thing I can do *is* to take the boy and go with Silas. He says I'm likely to do better there than here these times, and when Lafayette don't go to school he can do boy's work for his uncle's family. The Squire said he'd buy the leather that I have on hand, and hire our piece of land, and look after the house — perhaps he'll buy the place, but he thought

we'd better shut up the house for the present."

"And *I*, father—did Mrs. Moony say I might come and help Dolly?" asked Phily, all her soul in her brave eyes.

Her father gave another stern look at Lafayette with no apparent reason. "I didn't see much of her," he answered. "But she talked it over with her husband; and then she said Dolly had no patience with young help in the kitchen, and it would be too hard for you. But she told me to tell you not to be troubled, for she felt sure you'd find a better place."

"But what *could* be better?" said Phily. "They don't really want me," she added to herself. "I think I *could* get along with Dolly. I wonder what I shall do! Father *cannot* take me with him, anyway."

As soon as his brother had reached a decision, Silas Mills was impatient of the least delay in starting, and George yielded to his wishes just as he had used to do when they were little fellows in short-clothes. Silas went hurrying around, looking into farmers' barns with empty bays and bare scaffolds, and bought a good saddle-horse for sixteen dollars—the buyers had the ruling of prices that year. He bade Lafayette carry home to the owners the small amount of cobbling jobs his father had on hand, and announced with the air of authority that they must be ready to leave by sundown the next day; they would take an evening ride

of ten miles to a good stopping-place, whence they could make a fresh start by the first gleam of morning.

"If George gets the rheumatism I'll sell the horse and send him on by the stage," he told Phily.

"But what am *I* to do?" thought Phily. "Don't you wish," she said to Lafayette, "that Mrs. Moony *would* let me try and work with Dolly?"

"I d'n' know's I do," answered Lafayette, with an impatient turn of his head. "Don't you wish you could go with *us*? Uncle Silas says perhaps some time he'll take me to New York City. All the new houses there are made of brick or stone; and the steamboats carry, each one, a hundred folks, and go a hundred and sixty miles up the river. I wish I could go on 'em!"

Poor Phily! To have Lafayette so forgetful of her just as he was going away surprised her. He was not usually so selfish.

The next morning all was stir and confusion in the little house. Mr. Mills was busy packing saddle-bags; Lafayette was gathering together his little store of boy's treasures; Mrs. Dyer, summoned to assist by putting in better repair the Sunday suits of father and son, was nervously making her needle fly in order to finish her task; and Phily, still ignorant where she was to go, was trying to seem cheerful and feeling like a castaway.

The news of the coming departure had spread, and later in the day the neighbors began to come in. Squire Moony was there, and went bustling about in a very gay mood. He had a few words with Mrs. Dyer, who stopped her sewing to listen. He beckoned to Doctor Todd, and the two went out of doors together and talked a long while. They seemed to be friendly now.

Phily summoned all her courage, and went to Mr. Moony when he came in. "Squire Moony," she said, "don't you suppose if I tried my very best to please her, Dolly would be willing I should work with her?"

Mr. Moony looked at her very kindly and shook his head. "Keep calm, Phily," he said; "you sha'n't be left alone in an empty house. Keep calm a little while."

But little Phily's heart was *not* calm. It was clear that Mr. and Mrs. Moony did not wish for her to come there. She must try for herself.

"Doctor Todd," she asked, going where he stood, "do you know of any place where I can go and work for my keeping? You see, it's such a hard year! and when my father and brother are gone I shall be all alone!"

Doctor Todd was kind, but he did not seem as pitiful as she had thought he would be. "Put by your trouble for now, Phily; there will be some way out of it," he said.

A little after, when she was out drawing water from the well, the minister came. He

had brought a silk handkerchief and a Catechism, as parting gifts to Lafayette; and Phily was glad to see him a moment before he went into the house. *He* had been having a long talk with Squire Moony at the gate; why was it the Squire kept going to the gate, and looking up the hill as if watching for some one?

"Mr. Wright," said Phily, her voice beginning to shake a little, "do you know of any good place where I can go and work enough to pay for my keeping?"

"I cannot tell you *now*, Philomela," he said, "but I think you will find some good place. This is the time for you to trust Providence."

"Oh, he does not know!" thought Phily, growing more and more restless. "A learned man like him! There is Mrs. Dyer; *she* knows about trouble and hard times — I'll go to her."

And Mrs. Dyer was hurrying and almost out of breath trying to finish the repairing of Lafayette's coat.

"Oh, Mrs. Dyer! what can I do?" asked Phily.

"Bring me two more buttons like these," said Mrs. Dyer, "and then darn Lafayette's feeting."

"I mean what shall I do for a home?" said the little girl. "Have you prayed that I may find one, Mrs. Dyer?"

"No, Phily, I hain't prayed," said the truthful Mrs. Dyer; "but I'm pretty sure you'll be taken care of. You must trust in the Lord;

and now get the two buttons and finish this mending."

And Phily found the buttons, and tried to do as she was bidden; but the tears had at last begun to come. Stepping out the side-door to hide them, there stood before her an awkward, red-faced young fellow, who came up to her at once. "Are you the girl that wants to work out?" he asked. "If you are, I know of a place."

"And where is the place?" asked Phily.

"Where the stage stops," said the boy. "The stage-driver lives there, and his wife wants some one to take care of the children. The oldest one is sickly and has to be humored, and the baby is teething and cries all the time unless he's carried about."

Phily had seen the sick child at the window, and heard the frantic screams of the baby who demanded to be carried around. She nodded. "I know where it is. You may tell the woman that I will come and see her to-morrow."

She was almost twelve — why should she not try to think and act for herself?

Then she heard the sound of wheels — some one else coming! Longing to hide from sight, she hastened through the house, and shutting herself in the parlor bed-press threw herself on the bed, and sobbed and sobbed as though her heart would break; when suddenly she was clasped in warm arms, and her tear-drenched face was covered with kisses.

"You dear, dear child!" said Mrs. Moony, holding her close, "didn't you know how I've always longed for and coveted you? and now you are going to be always our own loved, precious little daughter! I made my husband promise that *I* might tell you *first of all!*"

And then, pushing into the bed-press, came Lafayette. "Oh, Phily! Phily!" he said, "I've known it ever since yesterday morning, and I haven't told you one word! I've just tried hard to cheer you up by talking about canals and such things." Phily drew the little fellow close to her. She understood him now. He was no selfish boy. He had never seemed so dear to her before.

And then in the spare-room appeared Squire Moony. "Come out here, Phily," he said, in a tone of kind authority. His own eyes were moist, but he was impatient of the weeping of the others. "Come here, Phily;" and he lifted her from the floor, and printed on each of her wet cheeks a resounding kiss. "Do you suppose," he said, "that I wanted you to work in my kitchen? No, Phily; I am going to buy you a red gown, and put some gold beads round your neck, and take you out riding in the chaise, with mother and me!"

And now together into the spare-room came George and Silas, and the minister, and Doctor Todd, and Mrs. Dyer, with her daughters just arrived; and in the rear, unasked, but none the less eager to see and hear, the boy who had

helped Phily to "a situation." And Lafayette, his new handkerchief well displayed, stood between his father and his uncle, and Philomela between the Squire and his wife; and the minister looked from one to the other and said, "To Him who setteth the solitary in families, and guideth the feet of the traveler, let us pray!"

XIII.

THE ADOPTED DAUGHTER.

AT last, when with many good-byes the travelers set forth on their long journey, Squire Moony turned the key of the small house, and lifted Phily into the chaise with his wife. "It's time, little daughter, to go home," he said; and everything seemed so new and strange to her, that the little girl sat without a word, and when they came to the house she hardly tasted of Dolly's waiting supper.

"You are so tired, dear," said Mrs. Moony; "I am going to give you some valerian, and put you to bed, at once." So she combed out Phily's hair, and tied under her chin one of her own night-caps, large enough for a sunbonnet, with tamboured crown and knife-crimped ruffle, and put her into a little bedroom near her own, opening into the sitting-room, as bedrooms then used to do; and Phily lay awake, the linen round her fragrant with the odor of "sweet grass," and wondered if her mother and little Rosann knew what kind friends had come to Lafayette and to her. Then she heard Mrs. Moony talking to her husband, as they sat by the fire.

"The dear child," Mrs. Moony said, "needs some nice new clothes, and seeing them made will divert her from the trials she has had."

"And there is a light-weight saddle-horse," said the Squire, "that I can buy for a song, gentle and strong. He will be just the one for her to ride in the spring."

"And I want," said his wife, "that she should be highly educated when she grows up, and accomplished; taught to play on the harp, and to paint flowers on velvet, and to embroider."

Phily lay with wide-open eyes, and heard the tall clock strike the hours till midnight, when Mrs. Moony stole in to look at her treasure.

"You will have to take some more valerian. Why can't you sleep, Phily?" she asked anxiously. And Phily answered, "Because all is so new, and you are so kind; and besides, if I sleep I shall crush this beautiful cap, and spoil its handsome ruffles and crown;" and Mrs. Moony laughed, and brought one of her husband's large silk handkerchiefs and tied it on in place of the cap; and Phily dropped fast asleep, and knew nothing more till the sun looked in at her window.

It was a new life to which she awoke. Mrs. Moony had always been fond of her, while her husband had, heretofore, only regarded her as a good little girl that his wife "set by;" but now that she was, in point of law, soon to be his own child, he suddenly saw in her both beauty and intellect, while her sincere gratitude

and affection so won his heart that, without knowing it himself, his life was changed by hers.

The hard times had not touched him; he had recently inherited moneyed wealth, and had, besides, large stores of hay and grain, laid up in fruitful years against a time of want; and now he could by sharp though honest bargains, lay hold of much well-cleared land at nearly his own prices, and with small expense to himself add largely to his own property.

The calamity of the lost harvest had begun to be everywhere felt, and farmers were often utterly unable to support their families and carry their stock of cattle through the winter.

He was sitting one day in the little room where he kept his desk, adding up figures to make an estimate of the value of certain lands, from which he thought the hard-pressed owners would soon be forced to part, when Phily came in, wearing the promised red gown and gold beads, and with gold knobs in her ears.

"You don't know, Squire father," she said — "a *man* *couldn't* know — how beautiful these things you have given me are! Why, I looked in the glass —"

"I'll warrant that's true," said the Squire, laughing.

"But it almost made me cry," said Phily, "to think when I had *nothing* I could give you and my mother, that you, all of yourselves, should seem to be so glad to get me such wonderful things; and I thought —"

"What did you think?" said the Squire, laying his hand on the short curls, fresh from the curling-tongs, each side the glowing face.

"I thought," answered Phily, "that I wished I could do something for somebody who could never pay *me* back, just as you do for me; and there's just one thing I *can* do, Squire father. You know I had some pumpkins, and I saved the seeds of all of them; and you said that a man who comes here and goes back to Boston would buy them and pay fifty cents for a hundred seeds; and I thought I could sell my seeds, and buy some hay — a *little* hay for some poor man's cow, or a *little* meal for his family. I know how poor folks feel, and how when little Rosann was here I used to lay awake nights and cry, for fear we should have to mortgage our place, and then lose it."

"Well, Phily," said the Squire gently, "you bring me the pumpkin-seeds — count them first — and I'll see what I can get for them."

But when she was gone, he took the paper on which he had been ciphering, and dropped it into the fire.

"I think," he said, when a few days after, a man with whom he had been accustomed to share his business ventures called to see him, "that I shall not carry out the plan we talked about when you were last here. It has been a hard year for the poor, and for families that haven't been called poor till now. I've thought things over. Perhaps it's just as well for me

to carry a little of other men's loads, instead of making them any heavier."

It was not a "little" load, however, that Squire Moony took upon himself. He resolutely guarded his poorer neighbors against lasting injury from the pressing want of the times. He bought grain, and sold it for its actual cost; patiently put his energy into plans for the best future of the township; and through it all his little adopted daughter Phily was his friend and confident.

The spring of 1817 came at last; and with the first tinge of green in the fields the cattle were turned out from the barns to find pasture. When hay was commonly thirty dollars a ton, and frequently sold for more than twice that sum, when corn and rye were two dollars a bushel and wheat higher yet, and when Phily's pumpkin-seeds sold in Boston for a dollar a hundred—everybody was glad to see the starting grass.

And the nation, as well, gave promise of more prosperous days. The bitterness of party strife, which marked the war of 1812, had largely given place to a desire for the welfare of the whole country, and in this desire lay the best hope of its fulfillment.

So passed the "Poverty Year," and with it the poverty years of little Philomela's life.

It was too great a sacrifice for the Squire and his wife to lose the enjoyment of her presence in their house by sending her away to a board-

ing-school ; but they made sure that every opportunity of pleasure or improvement within home reach was hers.

She was sent to the minister to recite in rhetoric and "Watts on the Mind;" Doctor Todd was her riding-master when she tried her new saddle-horse; the choir-leader gave her singing-lessons; and a French teacher came from another town to instruct her in flower-painting and embroidery.

She wore a fine Leghorn hat, and had stockings with wrought clocks; and the Squire bought her costly clothes, and the books she loved — Scott's romances and Mrs. Hemans's poems; but, if ever she felt tempted to be self-satisfied, and proud of her belongings, there would always come back to her a memory of the days when, holding little Rosann, she looked on her withered garden; and she would hasten to make some one happier if she could.

She married, in early life, the young minister who, when Mr. Wright was called to a larger parish, came to fill his place. He was a wise, good man, who preached wise, good sermons that made wiser and better those who listened to them; and, though it reads like a fairy-tale, he was the pastor of that parish for forty years, and never had a lasting discord with any of his flock. "They keep me for my wife's sake," he used to say.

As for Lafayette, it was a joy to Phily that he proved to be a sincere, true man, with whom